

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 CAIRO 09947 081020Z

16

ACTION SCCT-01

INFO OCT-01 NEA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 EUR-12 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SY-04 IO-10

USSS-00 EB-07 /077 W

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O 080945Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 679

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TUNIS NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI NIACT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS NIACT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T CAIRO 9947

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: APIN

SUBJECT: RELEASED VC-10 HIJACKERS

REF: TUNIS 7540 AND 7544

1. TODAY'S CAIRO PRESS REPORTS SEVEN TERRORISTS AND FOUR HIJACKERS HAVE "VOLUNTARILY SURRENDERED TO PLO WHICH WILL TRY THEM". TUNISIAN GOVERNMENT RELEASED THEM TO PLO AND, ACCORDING TO PRESS STATEMENT GIVEN YESTERDAY BY ABU IYAD, THEY WERE FLOWN TO AN UNDISCLOSED DESTINATION AFTER THE FOUR HIJACKERS WERE REFUSED ASYLUM BY ALL ARAB COUNTRIES.

2. SINCE FAHMY AND I HAD DISCUSSED THE WHEREABOUT OF THE ELEVEN TERRORISTS/HIJACKERS ONLY THREE DAYS AGO (CAIRO 9911), I CALLED SIRRI THIS MORNING TO ASK IF HE COULD PROVIDE ANY INFORMATION WHERE THEY MAY HAVE BEEN TAKEN. SPECIFICALLY, HAD THEY COME TO CAIRO? SIRRI SAID HE, PERSONALLY, HAD NOT HEARD WHETHER THEY HAD BEEN BROUGHT HERE OR TAKEN ELSEWHERE. HE AGREED PASS ON ANY PERTINENT INFORMATION WHICH MFA MAY GET.

SECRET

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PAGE 02 CAIRO 09947 081020Z

3. COMMENT: CANNOT EXCLUDE POSSIBILITY THE ELEVEN HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO CAIRO. AS PREVIOUSLY INDICATED, GOE HAS BEEN EXPECTING THIS MIGHT HAPPEN. WE NOTE ARAFAT MET WITH MININT MAMDUH SALIM YESTERDAY AND, WHILE TIMING OF MEETING MAY HAVE BEEN MERELY COINCIDENTAL, IT COULD ALSO SUGGEST IT HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH HANDLING OF THE RELEASED TERRORISTS/HIJACKERS. AS DEPT AWARE, EGYPTIANS HAVE EARLIER TOLD US THAT IF THE ELEVEN RETURN TO CAIRO THEY WILL BE IMPRISONED NOMINALLY ON BEHALF PLO BUT ACTUALLY UNDER EGYPTIAN CUSTODY.

4. WILL ATTEMPT MONITOR THIS AS BEST WE CAN, ALTHOUGH BLANKET OF SECRECY SEEMS DELIBERATELY TO BE BEING WRAPPED AROUND ELEVEN'S DESTINATION.

EILTS

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